
DEVELOPMENT OF PUNJABI JOURNALISM DURING FREEDOM STRUGGLE IN PUNJAB

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The present paper deals with the factors which led to the rise, growth and evolution of Punjabi Journalism during freedom struggle. Here the Punjabi Journalism means from the printed material in different forms such as newspapers, journals, magazines, pamphlets, bills etc. in Gurmukhi. This period was considered a crucial one because of the social, religious and political events. It tries to draw the outcome of the Punjabi Journalism in all round awakening of socio-religious and political milieu of the nation leading it to the gate of liberation, which in the absence of the Punjabi Journalism would not have been achieved. However, in this chapter a detailed background of its growth and development has been traced out.

Punjabi Journalism owes its origin in pre-partition Punjab to its religious and reformist movements. Sharp reactions were evoked by the activities of Christian missionaries and many religious sects opposed it. Emulating the efforts of Christian Missions to spread education, some societies of Indian religions also came in to being. Among these some of them sprang in Punjab itself and flourished here while some came from outside. They expanded their base in Punjab. Before the end of 19th century, the religious and reformist movements played a role toward the origin of the Punjabi Journalism.

Punjabi Journalism is half as old as the Indian journalism i.e. little more than one hundred years. The first newspaper of India *Bengal Gazette* started its publication from Calcutta on 21 January, 1780 but *Gurmukhi Akhbar*¹ the first Punjabi Language paper-a weekly started from Lahore on 10 November, 1880. It was printed on Litho Press and its editor was Bhai Gurmukh Singh, a teacher in Oriental College, Lahore. This paper was a supporter of Singh Sabha Movement. So it was taken over by Singh Sabha Amritsar in 1883. The size of this paper was 20×30/8 and it had maximum ten pages.

In 1867, there started a fortnightly entitled *Akhbar Shri Darbar Sahib Sri Amritsar Jee*² from Amritsar with Munshi Hari Narayan and Firaya Lal its editors. This was the first ever newspaper in Punjabi Language and that too in Gurmukhi script. In the absence of Gurmukhi type, it was printed from hand-written copy fortnightly. It was pro-government in tone and tenor.³ This period witnessed the rise of Kuka Movement but it did not carry even a single story

on it. It published government advertisement and Court Notices, which were the main source of income of this paper. This paper praised the then Deputy Commissioner of Ludhiana who killed the Kukas.⁴

Although *Akhbar Sri Darbar Sahib Sri Amritsar Jee* preceded *Gurmukhi Akhbar* but its script was Gurmukhi and language was Hindi. Some scholars describe it as the first Punjabi Language newspaper. But linguistically speaking we shall call it a Hindi paper in Gurmukhi script not Punjabi just because of its script. Had its language been Punjabi though in Devnagri script we would genuinely have called it the first Punjabi Language paper. But now the *Gurmukhi Akhbar* which came out three years later in Punjabi Language and Gurmukhi script can rightly be called the first Punjabi Language paper.

Various Singh Sabhas and Chief Khalsa Deewan have played a vital role in the development of Punjabi journalism. Although seven Punjabi Language papers had been brought out in Gurmukhi script before 1876, yet the first Punjabi Language paper brought out in its real sense was published from Lahore in June, 1876 by Bhai Partap Singh Giani under the title *Akali Parkash*. This was the first chaste Punjabi Language paper in the field of Punjabi journalism. Bhai Partap Singh and Bhai Gurmukh Singh were fast friends. So when *Gurmukhi Akhbar* came on the scene in 1880, Bhai Partap Singh closed down his paper and started giving cooperation in the publication of new paper.

Soon a major portion of *Gurmukhi Akhbar* came to be used for the publication of news only. Since it could not be preserved in book form, Bhai Gurmukh Singh brought out a monthly *Vidyarak Punjab* in 1881 under his own editorship. But it could not survive long.⁵

In 1891, Diwan Buta Singh started journal namely *Khalsa Parkash*, a weekly in Gurmukhi. Given the level of literacy and aptitude for journalism, the circulation of this paper was reasonably good.⁶

Also it was Bhai Gurmukh Singh who started another weekly paper *Khalsa Akhbar* on 12 June, 1886 from Lahore. It was a representative of Khalsa Deewan and gained quick popularity. It was printed on Litho press. First, Giani Jhanda Singh was appointed its editor but soon this job was entrusted to Giani Ditt Singh, a renowned scholar and reformer of Sikh Panth. He was a poet also and occasionally gave his comments in the paper. He used to write the editorial in verse. Till 1889 this paper kept on with great eloquence but then faded out in litigation. It started again on 9 May, 1892 and was printed on Type press and its printing was improved now. Giani Ditt Singh passed away in 1901 and was succeeded by Bhai Mayya Singh Ahluwalia. This paper faced extinction in 1905. Although it advocated the Singh Sabha Movement vehemently for 12 years but the success of the movement deprived it of all the steam with the result that it closed down.

At that time the adornment of news or the division of columns was not as it is today. The headlines too were single-column or double column only. There was no system at all. If one corner of a column has editorial poem on it, on the other there would be an advertisement of antimony or marriage news. But mostly, the papers carried articles on Sikh traditions or those condemnatory of superstitions or idol-worship. Proceedings of religious discussion were also published in brief.⁷

In July 1885, a very interesting weekly paper *Punjabi Darpan* was released under the editorship of Lahora Singh from Khalsa Mitra Press, Amritsar. A study in to the different aspects of this paper reveals that not only about the contemporary Punjabi journalism but the journalistic scenario of those days in general. For the first time in the history of Punjabi journalism, *Punjabi Darpan* took the lead by publishing a picture of Maharaja Dalip Singh on 19 October, 1885. From 1886 to 1890 *Gurmat Parkashak*, *Khalsa*, *Khalsa Parkash* and *Singh Sabha Gazette* papers were released. Lahora Singh was the editor of *Singh Sabha Gazette* and it was printed from Chasma Noor Press, Amritsar. This paper was the supporter of Singh Sabha.

In 1886, Prof. Gurmukh Singh launched his third paper *Sudharak'* in 1881 and *Vidyarak Punjab* in 1886. Bhai Gurmukh Singh also established his printing press in the name of Khalsa Press and equipped it with Punjabi characters. It remained operational till 1896. This very year he launched a weekly *Khalsa Gazette* also. All these periodicals could not survive for long.⁸

The publication of a vernacular paper was not a profitable venture. The circulation of the paper was inhibited by a number of factors; first, the area in which a particular language was spoken, secondly, the stratum to which its clientele belonged was economically poorer and so the subscriptions were in arrears and pathetic appeals had to be made to the defaulters in the columns of the newspapers.

One thing common about Punjabi Language papers was that they were all cash-strapped with no source of income. They got very few advertisements and survived only under a passion for the welfare of Sikh Panth. Although they demanded subscriptions in advance, yet they were dispatched to the readers free of cost. If someone sent subscription on his own well and good otherwise appeals were issued for help. That was why the circle of their readership was very limited. On the other hand the circulation of the Urdu contemporaries had exceeded ten thousand.

The Punjabi Journalism had to face a lot of hardships. Sometimes they did not find a printing press. At times, the printing press owner would refuse to print because of his association with the other group. During these two decades, the tone of Punjabi Journalism was not political or rebellious. All of them laid stress on social reform and spread of education. None among them was going against the government but still, they could not find the printing facilities many a time.

The type-printers were very few but the number of papers had mushroomed. Therefore, it was natural that whatsoever paper succeeded in making a niche for itself, tried to set up its own printing press as well. For such an enterprise, he would make appeals for help. As a result its message reached the Indian forces also which shook the pillars of their traditional loyalty.

In 1894, Punjabi journalism took one more leap forward by founding Khalsa Tract Society. It started publishing a fortnightly entitled *Nirguniara*. An analysis of *Nirguniara* reveals that the contribution of Khalsa Tract Society towards the promotion of Punjabi language, literature, people, Sikh community and Punjabi society etc. was matchless. Dearth of ideas, shortage of enlightened men, religious degradation, ethical degradation and digression of the community marked the age when *Nirguniara* served as a light house.⁹

In May 1896, the monthly *Shuddhi Patra* was published from Lahore under the aegis of Lahore Shuddhi Sabha from Anglo-Sanskrit Press. It published news and statistics about those who switched over to Sikhism from other faiths. The aim of this paper was to bring back the deserters of Sikhism into Sikh fold after purgating them. It kept up its publication till 1899. Many newspapers were taken out in this very year viz. *Singh Sahai Gazette*, *Sudharak Alankar*, *Sikh Hand Bill*, *Sughad Saheli*, *Khalsa Naujawan Bahadur* and *Khalsa Samachar*. All these Punjabi Language papers aimed at propagating Sikhism, opposing Arya Samaj and expansion of Punjabi language.

During the last year of 19th century i.e. 1899 Dr. Charan Singh published a paper *Khalsa Samachar* from Amritsar. Thus, although Amritsar is not taken as the birth place of Punjabi journalism, yet it can proudly claim to be the second renowned hub of Punjabi journalism. All Punjabi Language papers of Amritsar have on them a deep political, social and religious imprint. This city can proudly say that *Khalsa Samachar* an uninterruptedly regular paper for 85 years had its origin and while no paper prior to freedom that had its origin in Lahore could survive so long. *Khalsa Samachar* was the mouthpiece of Chief Khalsa Diwan. Dr. Charan Singh expressed his views with civilized diction. It has a great contribution towards the progress of Amritsar city. Bhai Vir Singh's poems, politico-religious discoveries and original writings too contributed a lot towards giving renown to this paper. It also brought variety in the sequence of news. But primarily this paper remained pro-government.

Khalsa Naujawan Bahadur-the fortnightly was published on 5th October, 1899 from Amritsar in lithographic print. Its first editor was Sunder Singh Akali who was followed by Jarnail Singh. Its policy was propagation of religion.¹⁰

To safeguard and promote the interest of the community these Punjabi language newspapers initially depended upon the benevolence of the British government. They believed that the British were civilized, committed to the ideals of justice, welfare of the people and democratic rule. They were ready to introduce self-rule for associating the Indians with the government.¹¹ They further believed that the British had restored law and order, general peace and contentment hitherto unknown to the Indians under the indigenous rule.¹²

With the formation of Indian National Congress, Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Morcha, Budge Budge Ghat holocaust and Kama Gata Maru ship episode endowed Punjabi journalism with elements of religious propagation, women's education as also resentment against the government, nationalism and sacrifice etc. Punjabi journalism goes stronger and progresses, it gives way to the erosion of nationalism.

Sacha Dhandora a paper brought out from Lyalpur in 1908 deserves special mention because it introduced an inclination towards the national ire aimed at getting liberation from British slavery along with social reforms in Sikhism and propagation of Sikh tenets laid down in the Gurbani. Master Sunder Singh used to write very vigorously in this paper. It struggled a lot against knocking down a wall of Gurdwara Rakab Ganj and pulling Khalsa College Amritsar from out of the clutches of feudal lords.

Singh Sabha Movement provided a great fillip to the Punjabi Language papers and in the later period of this movement, a dozen Punjabi Language papers were being published. None of these was a daily paper. These papers published Sikh religion and women's education and at

times they would publish a poem or a brief literary writing. They were almost free from the political activities. Singh Sabha Movement (which started in 1873) gave way to Akali Movement in Punjab and some other movements at national level.

In 1908, an important paper, *Bir* was released. Monthly in the beginning it became fortnightly, weekly and then daily in due course of time. For some time it remained half daily as well. This has been the only paper which was twice published in a day. Its editor Charan Singh Saheed was the progenitor of daily journalism in Punjabi. Prior to this daily newspaper was treated as impossibility in Punjabi. Annoyed with the policy of the paper, Shaheed dissociated himself from the paper and released *Shaheed* himself. The avenues opened by *Bir* in Punjabi Language endowed Punjabi journalism perennially.

The real development of Punjabi journalism can be treated as having taken place during 1900 and 1930 because of various political and national movements in Punjab particularly the Akali movement. It is during these very years that Jallianwala Bagh massacre arises out of anti-Rowlett Act drive. After the Second World War, Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) comes into existence because of Akali movement and abetted by Russia, the Samajvadi (Socialist) movement also comes into being. These movements fanned anti-government passions and increased readership of both Punjabi Language papers and their readers.¹³ At this stage Punjabi journalism had to undergo various struggles and crises. Some papers would appoint a 'dummy' editor to escape from the state repression so that in case of a raid the actual editor is not arrested.

A cursory glance at the list of papers published these days reveals that it includes papers representing different religious communities and political ideologies. They represented various regions of the country. Surprisingly, in spite of having a very narrow readership range of Punjabi readers, there were Punjabi Language papers on different subjects and representing different classes. By that time, the Punjabi Language papers had set up printing machines right from the small pedal machines to the cylinder machines. Various kinds of Punjabi characters were moulded although the biggest size didn't exceed 20×30/4. But so far as the curiosity of their takers was concerned every single paper would reach hundreds of hands or ears at least; whenever a paper reached, it was read and listened to by a number of people. These papers were full of pungent eloquence. If not scared, the government remained at least wary of their existence. It would use all means of modernization, temptation and severity etc. both legal and illegal.¹⁴

With Gandhijee's Non-cooperation Movement, the voice of newspapers became more and more anti-establishment and the government too started committing undue excesses on them. The government amended the Press Act and started taking sureties from the proprietors not only publishers but printers also. These were taken even from the papers already running. But in spite of all this, Punjabi journalism kept representing the weal and woes of people with great courage. No doubt some papers restricted themselves to their motives of social religious and educational reforms but primarily Punjabi journalism maintained its focus on patriotism and public interest.

A prominent magazine published outside country was *Hindustan Ghadar* because it was brought out from an alien land during the period when the right to expression had a limit of its own in India. Therefore, all those transgressing this boundary line became associated with this paper. It was brought out from San Francisco (America) on 1st November of 1913. It had with it

the revolutionary team of that age including Lala Hardyal, Maulavi Barkat Ullah and Bhagwan Singh Pritam. The front page of this paper bore the three main objectives of this paper.¹⁵

The entry of *Ghadar* was just like a tornado or earthquake in Punjabi Journalism. It started reaching the readers in the languages like Hindi, Urdu, Bengalese and Marathi in lacs. Thus its message of rebellion would reach every week with new zeal, new arguments and blood-curdling poems. *Ghadar* would use references from Guru Granth, Gita and Quran to arouse the religious passion of readers to make them ready to sacrifice for the country. It set ablaze the brewing embers of craving for freedom. The government banned the entry of *Ghadar* in Punjab. Anybody in possession of this paper was arrested and punished. Still it reached each and every village of Punjab.

The first Punjabi daily *Shaheed* started its publication on 4 December, 1914 with the S. S. Charan Singh 'Shaheed' as its editor. It presented political and social problems and evils in the humorous and satirical manner. Charan Singh 'Shaheed' remained servant first in the court of Maharaja Nabha and then Maharaja of Patiala. After a prolonged service of Maharaja Patiala, he set up his own Khalsa Press. The people sided with Maharaja Nabha while Shaheed was a supporter of Maharaja Patiala. Therefore despite a very good literary and editorial talent possessed by 'Shaheed', this paper could not gain much popularity and became extinct.

The second phase of Punjabi journalism starts with the beginning of 20th century. During the first decade of 20th century, the papers of Bengal had started mentioning the Russian Revolution and other international developments, while Punjabi journalism did not feel much affected by these incidents. Chief Khalsa Diwan was the representative class of Sikhs and almost all Punjabi Language papers supported it. But due to some later developments, there came a new turn in Punjabi journalism. For the first time it started including political ideas and comments.¹⁶

Till the First World War started, a number of Punjabi monthlies had appeared on the scene. They included prominently *Khalsa Sewak* and *Gurmat Parkash*. In spite of the state's oppressive posture, they kept writing anti-British articles. As a result the flame of hatred against the English became ablaze. But since the government had to recruit soldiers of war from Punjab, it became more rigid. The press laws were made so stringent that they posed a threat to the very existence of these periodicals. But when the war ceased, the anti government feelings once again became conflagrant.

In 1917 two papers *Sikh Sipahi* and *Sant Sipahi* were released in favour of recruitment in English army. *Sikh Sipahi* was brought out from Ferozepur by Sikh Recruiting Committee under the editorship of Tek Singh.¹⁷ This periodical was dedicated to the 'Crown, Country and Community'. Since it was published in the wake of the World War I, it contained news and poems on loyalty and essays about Punjabi soldiers and martial bravery. A part of it was published in Urdu also. This paper ceased to be in 1920. *Sant Sipahi* was published by Bhai Takhat Singh from Ferozepur. After one year it was made weekly.

The Namdharis of Punjab realised the relevance of journalism when they found that without its newspaper no community could bring its problems and grievances to the notice of government as well as countrymen and world around. They further realised that the press could play an important role in building up public opinion. It was only the public pressure that could force the government to mend its policies towards people. They further realised that it was very

essential for any community to have its own print media for projecting its image around the world. In the wake of this realisation the Namdharis started their *Satjug*, a weekly Punjabi newspaper at Lahore in 1920.¹⁸

The Jallianwala massacre and zeal to liberate the Gurdwaras breathed a new life into Punjabi journalism. In the midst of these conditions, the first effective daily *Akali* came into existence in 1920. One of the aims of this paper was creation of political and national awareness among Sikhs and exhorting them to participate in the freedom struggle. Since it was founded by the extremist leader like Master Sunder Singh Lyallpuri it came into conflict with the government on several occasions and suffered forfeiture and suppression. The zealous writings of *Akali* gave rise to the Akali Movement. The people had become so much enthusiastic about this movement that the state repression could not have much impact on the paper. Along with Gurdwara reforms, the *Akali* remained very active in the freedom struggle in Punjab also. It started inspiring the Sikhs for making every possible sacrifice for the freedom of the country. *Akali* advocated the cause of Hindu-Sikh unity. Although the old British loyalists got many dailies published to oppose *Akali* and cooperate with the government but the people evinced no interest in them. This failure made the government file maximum suits against *Akali* during its very first 2-3 years and put its about two dozen editors behind the bars.

Daily *Akali* or *Akali Te Pardesi* as it was named later can be called a major paper of Punjabi movement-journalism. It was not published by someone just to satiate his political or pecuniary lust. It represented the whole Sikh community and the whole community ran it as well. The tale of its inception is very interesting. When the Jallianwala massacre unified the Gurdwara liberation movement and freedom struggle, the Sikhs resolved to bring out their own daily paper. Master Sunder Singh was at the forefront of this project but nobody had the funds required for its execution. Master Tara Singh and Principal Niranjan Singh too were not rich enough. One day Master Sunder Singh brought five hundred rupees from someone and said, "Lo bring out the paper." Principal Nirajan Singh gave some energetic youths. That year, the annual conference of Congress and Sikh League was held in Amritsar. The boys were very active. Therefore, they did wonders. On Guru Arjan Dev's Martyrdom Day (21 May, 1920) *Akali* daily was released. Almost a month hereafter, Giani Hira Singh 'Dard' joined it. He was joined a couple of months later, by Tehsildar Mangal Singh who had kicked his job. Then came Sardul Singh Kavishar and Dalip Singh (who was killed in Nankana Sahib blood-letting in 1921). Although this paper was published under the influence of Akali movement but in a way it activated the movement. This very year Shiromani Gurdwara Prabhandhak Committee (SGPC) had come into existence, but it did never hold the reins of this paper. Thus it slipped from under the stewardship of Shiromani Akali Dal but at that time Shiromani Akali Dal and SGPC managers shared a common platform. Therefore they extended their personal support and patronage to the paper and the common Sikhs also helped it profusely.¹⁹

Within two and half years, the government arrested about ten editors of *Akali*; some sureties were confiscated. Cases of defamation worth 40 lacs were filed and decrees were issued. Among those imprisoned, there were Master Mangal Singh, Master Sunder Singh and Gopal Singh Qaumi. Gurmukh Singh Musafir, one of its editors was arrested in Quit India Movement of 1942. He was succeeded as editor by Giani Uttam Singh.

About thirty papers were released under the influence of Akali Movement viz. *Akali*, *Sansar*, *Jathedar*, *Pardesi Khalsa*, *Sangat*, *Ramgarhia Gazette*, *Akali Te Pardesi*, *Gargajj Akali*,

Babbar Sher, Satsang, Sant Sewak, Dharmavir, Sant Samachar, Kirpan Bahadur, Desh Sewak, Nirol Khalsa, Qaumi Dard, Riyasati Qahar, Chhankara, Gehar Gambhir, Azad Bhain, Preet Lari, Phulwari, Kirti, Bir Khalsa etc.²⁰ All these papers presented new examples of courage, perseverance and sacrifice. On the other hand, for Chief Khalsa Deewan publications, higher than Sikh Panth was the English government. Cooperating with the government to gain some positions and concessions was the sole aim of these papers.²¹

Daily *Ranjit* was brought out by Comrade Sohan Singh Josh in 1920 in competition with *Akali*. Gurbakhsh Singh Kesari was its editor but due to its anti Akali stance it closed down soon. Another daily *Bir Khalsa* was introduced by Arjan Singh Gargajj-an active leader from Taran Taaran. Who would have the audacity to print the thunderous writings of Gargajj ? So he kept cyclostyling them himself. He remained the editor of *Kirti* and *Nawan Zamana* also.

Akali Movement was at its peak in 1922. This year witnessed release of an unprecedented number of daily papers. Reading newspapers daily had become a routine of people in general. Normally, the newspapers were read out in the gathering of Gurdwaras and other congregations. Harbans Singh and Gopal Singh Qaumi brought out a paper *Azad Akali* from Lahore in cyclostyle form. It was a hardliner paper. Under this very title another paper was released from Amritsar by Rattan Singh in 1926.

In February 1922 Chief Khalsa Diwan published *Khalsa*- a daily under the editorship of Bhai Jodh Singh. Later it was merged with the weekly *Khalsa te Khalsa Advocate*. The *Khalsa Advocate* was first brought out from Amritsar in the form of English monthly in 1903. About ten years thereafter it was merged with *Khalsa* in August 1913 with the same periodicity. From 1930, it was converted into a Punjabi Language paper. In 1937, Sadhu Singh Hamdard also remained its editor.

On 22nd February, 1922 Master Tara Singh released *Pardesi Khalsa*. Since this was the voice of Khalsa, this paper was sent generous funds by the Sikhs settled abroad. On 22 July, 1922 it merged with *Akali* and started getting published under the title *Akali Te Pardesi*.²²

The periodicals and leaflets published by the Babbar Akalis revived the pattern of political propaganda of the Ghadar revolutionaries. They launched the *Babbar Akali Doaba Akhbar*, a cyclostyle news-sheet in 1922. Babu Santa Singh, Dilip Singh Gonsal and Karam Singh were appointed editor of this newspaper. This year Sant Nidhan Singh released daily *Kuka* from Lahore to oppose the Akali movement and popularise the tenets of Namdhari sect.

On 15 June, 1922 daily *Babbar Sher* was started. It was the second effort of Gargajj Akali Deewan. Its editors were Gurbachan Singh Akali and Lachman Singh. It publishes revolutionary articles. Their 15 editors arrested and fined in 15 days due to their anti-government articles. In terms of punishment and ideological changes, *Babbar Sher* also broke new ground in Punjabi journalism.

On 17 August, 1922 another daily *Kuka* was published from Lahore. It supported Kuka Movement. Therefore, their editors were arrested soon and sent to the jails. From August 1922 to May 1923, about fifteen issues of this newspaper were published. This periodical regularly highlighted the miserable economic conditions of the people and their exploitation at the hands of a foreign government. According to an official report this paper exhorted the Akalis to

abandon the non-violent doctrines and called upon them to kill the foreigners and establish a free government. The report further states that the Babbar leaflets also incited the soldiers to murder their European Officers.²³

The *Kirpan Bahadur*, a radical weekly founded by Seva Singh in 1922 and published from Amritsar. This newspaper published biographical sketches of Kartar Singh Sarabha and Rash Bihari Bose for which Seva Singh was prosecuted and sentenced to one year's imprisonment with a fine of Rs. 200/- in 1927.²⁴ However *Kirpan Bahadur* continued its radical stance in terms of supporting those Punjabis who struggled against the British government to liberate Hind. It honoured Akalis, Babbar Akalis and revolutionaries who laid down their lives for the cause of the country. The masthead of this periodical claimed that it was only weekly nationalist paper and stood for Pooran Azadi.²⁵

The Punjabi Language papers carried out the Akali movement on communal and patriotic lines. From 1920 to 1936 some Punjabi weeklies and monthlies also contributed a lot towards the development of Punjabi journalism and freedom struggle in Punjab. They included *Panch*, *Khalsa Samachar*, *Parliament Gazette*, *Malwa Gazette* and *Kakaar Bahadur*. The issues like Gurdwara Bill, atrocities on political Sikh prisoners and mutual antagonism among the Sikh rulers and conspiracies etc. were the main topics of these papers.

During these days the editors had no capital and those who had, had been pitched against them. Their coffers were open for the touts only. They were against the government so they could not expect any largesse from the state in the form of advertisements. The private companies avoided doing so out of fear of the government. Moreover, the number of Punjabi readers was also limited. Urdu was more in vogue. There was no end to the problems of printing also. The printers who printed them were asked to deposit sureties.

The editors were not given any sufficient salary nor did they get respect in government premises. They always lived under the fear of hand cuffs, shackles and sequestration etc. They were not properly trained either.²⁶

Each and every paper was read by more than one hundred readers. Although the Punjabi Language papers did not have much circulation but they enjoyed great influence. At that time the people used to read papers while sitting on the dry logs of wood and kept reading them as long as they did not turn into shreds. The range of Punjabi Language papers remained confined to the Sikh readers only.²⁷

It is worth mention here that although the Punjabi Language papers of this period whether daily or weekly, was quite strong and influential from the propaganda point of view but they lagged much more behind in comparison to English and Urdu press. They were very small in size i.e. only six pages of 20×30/4 size and had very limited material to read as they were printed in 16 point. Much of the space was covered by the headlines. The whole paper could be finished within ten minutes.²⁸

The number of Punjabi weeklies which appeared during the third decade of 20th century had reached about one hundred. Most of them were associated with one movement or the other.

With the termination of movement the paper also died down. Among them *Riyasati Dunia*, *Veer Akali*, *Desh Dardi*, *Sacha Dandora*, *Ramgarhia Gazette* and *Desh Sewak* were very popular.

The founding of *Desh Sewak* in 1923 was another mile stone in the history of Punjabi journalism for it perceived religion and politics in new perspective. It was popular by its editors. Its editors were Dr. Bhag Singh and Master Mota Singh, who was revolutionary intellectuals. Its articles were informative and in favour of freedom struggle. Unfortunately its all writers had remained behind the bars. It closed down in 1926. This newspaper was weekly in 1923 and made bi-weekly in the next year. It was printed by the Khalsa National Press, Jalandhar. It was financed and published on behalf of the Canadian-American Press Punjabi which was operating from Vancouver in 1922.²⁹

At this stage, Giani Hira Singh Dard released another very important magazine *Phulwari* in 1924. It was not straightway, a political magazine. It was literary. It remained suspended from 1942 to 1946 due to Giani Dard's going to jail. It was very popular in religious, political and literary circles. Giani Dard was a good journalist who participated in social, religious and political movements of the country. His aim was to get freedom. He entered the field of journalism for the fulfillment of this aim. During martial law he quit the job and joined the editorial board of *Akali*.

During those days Bhai Santokh Singh was a very sensible communist who was in Punjab as representative of Moscow. With the efforts of Santokh Singh, *Kirti* started under the patronage of communist writers like Sohan Singh Josh and Arjan Singh Gargajj in January, 1925. The size of this paper was 20×30/8 and it was printed from Onkar Press, Amritsar. Bhagat Singh also remained associated with this paper for some time. It hardly reached anywhere by mail as it would invite raids on post-office not the printing press and took away all the copies. Therefore, the paper was supplied hand to hand and the people too read it at their own risk. It has also to be noted that like *Akali*, the editors of the *Kirti* too were the ghost-editors. Normally those who were actually meant to go behind bars were produced as editors. In 1930, when the special issue of *Kirti* on the topic of gallows came out, it made the bureaucracy tremble in their boots. Comrade Sohan Singh Josh and some other associates of his were booked in Merath conspiracy case. It was due to such reasons that *Kirti*-the socialist paper had to be closed. So such exorbitant securities were demanded that it became difficult to continue the paper. Ultimately, it had to be closed down in 1930 after five years of matchless service. Then it continued till 1934-38 but in 1938 Anti-Bandobast Morcha was started. Once again *Kirti* closed down and then it remained as such. This paper remained a supporter of laborers and farmers. It remained at the forefront in freedom struggle in Punjab and kept propagating the progressive ideas in the Punjabi society.

The emergence of *Kirti* gave a new twist to Punjabi journalism. For the first time it dwelt on the propagation of scientific socialism. There was no dearth of rebellious writing in Punjabi Language papers earlier also but they had no goal before them. They were charged with the inspiration of national freedom but they had no vision as to what kind of a new social order is to replace the existing one. *Kirti* infused a new life in the farmers and workers. It instilled among them a faith that the day they united, the trammels of slavery will be cut asunder. This call also gave strength to the freedom struggle. Not only the news and articles, but the poems published in *Kirti* were also very invigorating.

On 15 December, 1929 Panch Khalsa Deewan started paper *Malwa Gazette*. The aim of this paper was the social, political, religious and economic development of Malwa region's Sikhs. The Panch Khalsa Deewan also started a paper *Khalsa Suani* for the development of women and its editor was Niranjan Kaur.³⁰

By the end of third decade of 20th century, Punjabi Journalism had spread far and wide at home and abroad. Wherever, the printing of Punjabi was possible, a Punjabi Language paper emerged there. The larger concern of the radical Punjabi Language newspapers was to mobilise the Sikh masses for liberating the gurdwaras from the control of corrupt and morally depraved priestly class. However, the task of liberating gurdwaras was basically related to the ultimate goal of liberating the country. An important concern of these newspapers was to build up freedom struggle to attain independence.

Preet Lari, the most beloved Punjabi monthly was released in this year. It not only founded new values in Punjabi Journalism in the form of subjects, style and effects but attracted the attention of everybody towards its lofty standard. This monthly of modern age has been of largest circulation and its influence has covered not only Punjabis but the entire Punjabi loving lot. When the Second World War started in 1939, *Preet Lari* condemned severely the initial victory of Hitler. After war *Preet Lari* made its mission to strengthen the peace movement, aired anti-imperialistic views and supported the socialist movement.

In 1935, the third paper *Parbhat* of Kirti Kissan Lehar was published from Amritsar. Its editor was Sohan Singh Josh. But since the communists wanted to organize the communist movement at international level under the name of Kirti Kissan Lehar, this paper could not survive for more than a year.

Bawa Harnam Singh brought out *Prem Sandesh* in 1937, first from Lahore and then shifted it to Amritsar. Its editor was Pritam Singh Panchhi and it was a progressive (communist) paper. Master Sunder Singh Lyalpurī the founder of *Akali* published *Daler Khalsa* in 1938. It continued till the independence of country.

In 1939, a fine quality literary magazine *Panj Dariya* appeared under the ownership and editorship of Prof. Mohan Singh. Every Punjabi litterateur felt proud to associate his name with this magazine. But the credit for its success goes to Prof. Mohan Singh only. Not only in Punjabi journalism, it set a new trend in Punjabi literature as well and showed new avenues and goals to Punjabi litterateurs.

During the two decades, prior to the freedom of the country, the Punjabi dailies were divided into two factions of Sikhs. *Akali* and *Akali Patrika* were two prominent dailies during those days. Giani Gurmukh Singh Musafir was the editor of *Akali* while Partap Singh Kairon was the editor of *Akali Patrika*. Thus Punjabi Journalism produced political leaders also. These papers focused a lot on the Vidhan Sabha polls and contributed their mite toward the freedom struggle in Punjab.

When Germany attacked Russia, the anti-British communists changed their stand and they became pro-government. Now they started describing this war as fascist instead of war for freedom. To inspire for joining the army, they released *Jang-e-Azadi* in 1943 from Lahore. During the War it supported Russia and its allies. It carried pro-British articles.

In April 1944, Patiala State released a fortnightly *Patiala Samachar*. It published government announcements and notices. It publicized the policies of government. This year *Nawan Chanan* was also started from Moga under the patronage of Giani Zail Singh, the freedom fighter and its editor was Niranjana Singh Mittha. It was a nationalist paper. It closed down in 1947. In 1945, Master Tara Singh started another politico-religious periodical *Sant Sipahi* from Amritsar. It was read with great respect by the Sikh community.

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